

# COVID-19 Update

## August 12: Updated NM Mask Guidelines, CDC Interim Guidelines for Testing Fully Vaccinated People, Vaccination in Pregnant People

*Today's issue features an update on masking guidelines across Northwestern Medicine, as well as information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about testing fully vaccinated individuals after exposure to COVID-19. It also includes an update from Maternal Fetal Medicine specialist **Emily S. Miller, MD**, about vaccination recommendations for pregnant people.*

### **NM UPDATES MASK GUIDELINES TO ALIGN WITH CDC RECOMMENDATIONS**

Consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated masking guidelines for fully vaccinated individuals in non-healthcare settings, Northwestern Medicine will now require a mask in:

- Public spaces of all buildings, both administrative and clinical, such as lobbies and elevators
- Conference centers and auditoriums

In all other shared spaces, masks are recommended, but not required. This includes common areas and conference rooms in administrative spaces.

Masks continue to be required in all clinical settings and for anyone who is not vaccinated.

**Vaccination remains the best way to prevent COVID-19.** Authorized vaccines in the U.S. are highly effective at protecting individuals against symptomatic and severe COVID-19. Infections in fully vaccinated people are uncommon, even with the delta variant.

Please remember that symptom attestation is required daily when you are onsite. Anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home. Please fill out the **COVID-19 Hotline Employee Triage Questionnaire** if you are experiencing symptoms.

### **CDC GUIDELINES FOR TESTING AFTER EXPOSURE IN FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS**

The CDC released updated health guidelines for fully vaccinated individuals following exposure to COVID-19.

#### **Testing After Exposure**

Fully vaccinated people should be tested three to five days after a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. They should isolate if they test positive. Fully vaccinated people who live in a household with someone who is immunosuppressed, at increased risk of severe disease, or unvaccinated (including children under 12 years of age) should also consider masking at home for 14 days after a known exposure or until they receive a negative test result.

Most fully vaccinated people with no COVID-like symptoms do not need to quarantine or be restricted from work after an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, if they follow the testing and masking recommendation above. Fully vaccinated people should monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days after an exposure.

For the complete list of CDC guidelines for fully vaccinated individuals, please visit the [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People page](#) on the CDC website. For information about patient vaccinations available across NM, please visit the [Patient Vaccine Toolkit page](#) on Physician Forum or [NMI](#) (login required).

### VACCINATION IN PREGNANT WOMEN

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is now recommending the COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant and lactating women. According to the CDC:

- COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all people 12 years and older, including people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future.
- Evidence about the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy has been growing. These data suggest that the benefits of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine outweigh any known or potential risks of vaccination during pregnancy.
- There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems in women or men.

Additionally, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine released a joint statement to officially recommend the COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant and lactating people. The organizations had previously recommended the vaccine not be withheld based on pregnancy status, but they stopped short of officially recommending vaccination as pregnant people had been excluded from the trials of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Previous concerns regarding vaccination in pregnancy included questions of safety and efficacy, as immunogenicity may change during pregnancy. Data from recent [research](#) in Israel demonstrate that the Pfizer vaccine was 78% effective at preventing SARS-CoV-2 infection at 28 days after administration. This effectiveness is slightly lower than data from the general population, which could represent a decreased immunologic response in the pregnant state. Alternatively, this attenuated benefit could be due to improved adherence to public health recommendations in pregnant people.

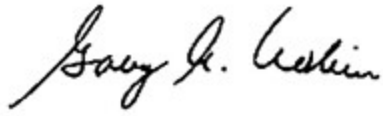
As of July 26, approximately 139,562 people have received a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy. In a recent [New England Journal of Medicine report](#), no identified differences in miscarriage, stillbirth, preterm birth, small size for gestational age, congenital anomalies or neonatal death were observed when comparing those vaccinated to published ranges of these outcomes. Collectively, the data affirm that the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the risk.

For additional information and resources to support pregnant individuals in making an informed decision, please visit the CDC, [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#) and the [Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine](#) websites.

---

Over the past several weeks, COVID-19 cases have been increasing in the Chicagoland area. The vast majority of patients admitted to NM hospitals with COVID-19 are unvaccinated. The currently available vaccines are protective against the delta variant and are an effective way to prevent

infection. Continuing to encourage vaccination among our colleagues and patients is the most effective method to prevent hospitalizations and deaths among unvaccinated individuals.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary A. Noskin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "G".

Gary A. Noskin, MD  
Senior Vice President, Quality  
Northwestern Memorial HealthCare  
Chief Medical Officer  
Northwestern Memorial Hospital